# The Only Door

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"I am the door: if anyone enters by Me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John 10:9.

[Another Sermon by Mr. Spurgeon upon the same text is #2752, Volume 47—THE DOOR.]

The Word of God tells us that in the midst of the great mass of men there are to be found a special people—a people who were chosen of God out of the common race before the stars began to shine—a people who were dear to God's heart before the foundation of the world, a people who were redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus beyond and above the rest of mankind, a people who are the special property of Christ, the flock of His pasture, the sheep of His hand, a people over whom Providence watches, shaping their course amid the tangled maze of life—a people who are to be produced at the last, every one of them faultless before the Eternal Throne and fitted for the exalted destiny which, in the ages to come, He shall reveal! All through Scripture you read about this particular and special people. Sometimes they are called "a seed," at other times "a garden," at other times "a treasure," and sometimes, as in the Chapter we have read, "a flock." The common name in the New Testament for them is "the Church"—"the Church of God which He has purchased with His own blood." "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word."

Now, the all-important question is how can we obtain admission into this Church? Where is this community to be found? Who are the members of it? What is the way to become a partaker of the privileges which belong to it? Jesus Christ here tells us two things—First, How to enter the Church The way is through Himself as the door. Secondly, What are the benefits we shall receive through being members of Christ's Church—we shall be saved and shall go in and out and find pasture.

I. HOW A MAN CAN BECOME A MEMBER OF THAT CHURCH WHICH IS ELECTED, REDEEMED AND WILL BE SAVED, IS SIMPLY AND BRIEFLY SOLVED BY OUR LORD'S FIRST ASSERTION.

Christ tells us that the only way to enter the Church is through Himself He is the door, the only door. There is no other mode of admission into His Church but through Himself. Let it be understood, then, once and for all, that we cannot get into the Church of Christ through Baptism. There are tens of thousands, yes, there have been millions who have been baptized after a fashion, that is to say, they have been sprinkled—and thousands have been

immersed—who never were admitted into the Church of Christ! In consideration of the ordinance as it was administered to them, with, or more commonly, without their consent, they were recognized by some persons as being Christians. But let me tell you that unless they came to Christ by true faith, they are nothing better than baptized Pagans! They are still just sprinkled heathen! Why, you might hold a man in an everlasting shower, but you could not, thereby, make him "a member of Christ." Or you might drag him through the Atlantic Ocean and if he survived the immersion, yet he still would not be one jot the better! The door is not baptism, but Christ! If you believe in Christ, you are a member of His Church. If your trust is stayed upon Christ, who is God's great way of salvation, you have evidence that you were chosen of Him from before the foundation of the world—and that faith of yours entitles you to all the privileges which Christ has promised in His Word to Believers!

If Christ is the door, then it follows that men do not get into the Church by birthright The Society of Friends has been one of the most useful communities in the world and it has maintained a good testimony upon most important points for many years. But it seems to me that the great evil in it—that which has done them the most mischief—is the admission of birthright membership. Do they not receive in their fellowship the children of their members as though they

were necessarily proper persons to be received into the visible Church? My Brothers and Sisters, it is a great privilege to have Christian parents. It may prove a very great advantage if you use it rightly. But it involves a great responsibility, and if you use it wrongly, instead of being a blessing to you, it may be a fearful curse! Though you may be one of a long line of saints, "Except a man is born-again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." The most pious example, the most godly training cannot ensure conversion—and without conversion, depend upon it—you cannot be Christ's. "Except you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Through our not practicing infant baptism, we do not so readily fall into this error as some denominations—still, it is necessary to say even here that you have no right to Gospel privileges because of your mothers and fathers. You must yourselves be born-again! You have no right to the Covenant of Grace, nor to the blessings or promises thereof, except as by your own personal and individual faith you come to Christ! It is not your father nor your mother who can be the door into Christ's Church for you, but Christ Himself. "I," He said, "I am the door." If you are in Christ, you are in His Church. If you have laid hold on Him, you are a member of that secret and invisible community of His elect and His redeemed—but it is not by Baptism, nor by birthright that you can ever be so!

Moreover, as Christ is the door, it is evident that a man does not come to be a member of the Church of Christ by making a profession of being so. He may prove himself to be a detestable hypocrite, but he cannot prove himself to be a genuine Christian by mere profes-

sion! Men do not get rich in this world by a lavish expenditure, or by a profession of being wealthy. They must hold the title deeds of their estate and have the cash in the strong box, or else they are poor in spite of all their pretensions! And you cannot become a Christian by coming forward and asking to be admitted into the Church, declaring that you believe and avowing that you repent. No, verily, but you must truly repent, or you shall perish! You must truly believe, or you shall have no part or lot in this matter! The mere saying, "Yes, yes, I am willing to profess this, I am willing to say that," no more makes you a Christian than it would make cotton to be silk to call it so, or make mud to be gold by labeling it with that title! Beware of a false profession, for it is doubly hazardous. The man who has no Grace is in danger, but the man who makes a profession of having it when he has none, is in double danger, for he is the least likely to be awakened and he is certain, unless Sovereign Grace prevents, to make his profession a pillow for his wicked and slumbering head till he sleeps himself into Hell!

Further, and this may, perhaps, touch the point more closely—a man does not get to be one of the Lords people, or to be one of Christ's sheep, by being admitted into any visible church. He ought not to try to get into any visible church until he is in the trueChurch! He has no right to join the external organization until he has first got into the secret conclave by a living faith in Christ. If he leaves the door alone, and climbs over the wall and comes into the outward church without being a Believer in Christ—so far from being saved, Christ will say to him, "You are a thief and a robber, for you have climbed up some other way and you came not in by the door." I believe we do rightly to subject the admission of members to the voice of all the Church. I believe we do rightly to examine candidates to see whether they make a creditable profession and whether they know what they are doing. But our examination—oh, 'tis nothing better than skin deep! We cannot search the heart and the best judgment of ever so many Christian men, though honest, and deserving to be treated with great respect, would be a very poor thing to rest upon. If you have not Christ, your church certificates are waste paper and your membership with any people, however pure and Apostolic they may be, is but a name to live while you are dead—for the only way, the sole way of getting into the real, vital, living Church of Christ is by coming to Christ who is Himself the door!

The plain English of this metaphor then, is just this—to be one of Gods people, the essential thing is a simple dependence upon Jesus Christ If you have not this—no matter who baptizes you, or who gives you the consecrated bread and wine, or who preaches to you about a hope of salvation for which there is no warrant—you will die in your sins, notwithstanding all your sacraments unless you come to Christ! No other admittance to Heaven can there be but by a simple dependence upon Him who has bled and died on Calvary's Cross! The preaching of any other system is a mere delusion against which the warning voice went forth or ever the snare was laid to trap the unwary!

Mark you, simple faith, where it is genuine, makes it plain that you do enter by Christ, the door, because such faith leads to obedience. How can you suppose that you are a member of His Church if you are not obedient to Christ? It is necessary that the man or woman who trusts Christ should become the servant of Christ. Real faith never kicks at this rule, but rather delights in it. "If you love Me," says Christ, keep My commandments." Unless we keep Christ's commandments out of a principle of love to Him, our religion is vain. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." We may

talk as we will about inward experiences and believing, but "by their fruits you shall know them." The Spirit of God is the Spirit of holiness. When Christ comes into the soul, all iniquity must be purged out of the soul. You know how Mala-chi describes His Advent. He proclaims to us the promise that the Lord whom we seek shall suddenly come to His Temple—that is, seekers shall be finders! Do you know what he adds? "But who may abide the day of His coming? For He is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap." Now, the refiner's fire burns up the dross, and fullers' soap takes out the stains—and so, if Christ is in you, you will pass through a refining that will burn up your outward sin—and you will be subjected to a washing like that of the fullers' soap which will cleanse you from all your iniquities. "Be not deceived, God is not mocked: for whatever a man sows, that shall he also reap." If you live after the flesh, you shall die! But if, through the Grace of Christ, you are living in Him, trusting in Him, always serving Him—service being the evidence of trust and trust being the evidence of your election—you have then come into the Church through the door—and it is well with you!

Now, if it is so, that Christ is the door into the Church, and if we have entered the Church through that door, it does not matter much to us what the old gentleman at Rome thinks of us. He may excommunicate us. This he is very fond of doing, for he is a rare hand at cursing, but what does it matter? It matters not one jot, if I am a new creature in Christ Jesus, how much the Pope may rail at me! Besides, there are plenty of revilers nowadays who are saying, "You NonConformists are only a pack of heretics! We have the Apostolic succession! We have the sacraments and the priests." Ah, they vaunt themselves as being "Catholic," though their claim is disallowed alike by the Babylon which is here below, and by the Jerusalem which is above! Let them vaunt if they will. As long as we have Christ, they may keep their Apostolic succession and all their other rubbish! Christ is the door and if we have come through Him, it is well with us!

I like that story of the Sandwich Islanders who had been converted through some of our missionaries and the Gospel had been preached to them for years. At last, two or three gentlemen in long black gowns landed there and the people asked them what they had come for. They said they were come to instruct them in the true faith and to teach them. Well, they said, they should be glad to hear it. If their teaching was true and like the Scriptures, they would listen to them. By-and-by, a little diagram was exhibited to the natives after the

similitude of a tree. This tree had many branches. The twigs which were farthest off were the different saints, the Believers, those who do good works. Then the limbs, which were a little larger, were the priests. The bigger branches were bishops, the biggest were the cardinals and, at last, these all joined on to the trunk—which was the Pope—and that went all the way down to the bottom till it came to Peter, who was the root, deriving his authority immediately from Christ. So the natives asked about all these twigs, branches and especially about certain rotten branches that were tumbling off into a fire. What were they? They were Luther, and Calvin, and other heretics who had been cut off from the true tree of the church. "Well," said one of the islanders, "and pray what is the root of the tree?" Of course that was allowed to be Jesus Christ. So they clapped their hands at once for joy, and said, "Never mind about the branches, and stems, and twigs—we have never heard of them—but we have got the Root, and that will do to grow on." In like manner, Brothers and Sisters, we can say tonight, if we have Christ, we have got the "root out of a dry ground." We have got the root of the matter, the basis, the sum, the substance of it—

"Let others trust what forms they please, Their hopes we'll not contest." Let them go about their business and rejoice in their fancies—but Christ is the door! We have Christ! We have entered by the Door! We have believed in Him, we have entered through Him into faith, and into joy, and into peace! We will be content with this—let others clamber up some other way if they please.

Before I leave this point, a question suggests itself—Have we all entered by the Door? We are agreed that Christ is the Door, have we entered by the Door? You who are growing old—I always feel much pleasure in seeing gray heads, the type of mellowed years, in the concourse of worshippers—have you all believed in Jesus? You know the Truth—you would not like to hear anything but the simple Gospel preached! But have you laid hold on the Gospel? A man my starve with bread on the table if he does not eat. And he may perish with thirst, though he is up to his neck in water, if he does not drink. Have you trusted Christ? If not, how can you remain in a state of unbelief, for "he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God"? Men and women in middle life, struggling with the cares of business, have you trusted in Christ? I know your thoughts are much taken up and necessarily so, with the world. But have you not time to think upon this question or dare you neglect it—"Do you believe on the Son of God?" If not, O man, your life hangs on a thread and that snapped, your ruin is certain! And, oh, you young

people, what a mercy it is to see you willing to come and hear the Word! But have you all heard it with your inward ears? Have you looked to my Master? Oh, it is sweet to come to Christ in the early morning of life, to have a long day of happiness before you! May it be the blessedness of each one of you! It is vain to look at the Door unless you enter. God give you Grace to come in if you have never entered before!

II. Our Lord and Master tells us WHAT ARE THE PRIVILEGES OF ENTERING THROUGH HIM, THE DOOR. The man who enters by Christ shall be saved and he shall go in and out, and he shall find pasture. He shall be saved. The man who believes in Jesus Christ shall be saved. He is saved and he shall be saved! A man has by accident killed his fellow man. The next of kin to the murdered man will be sure to kill the manslayer out of revenge if he can get at him. Therefore the poor man takes flight as quickly as he can towards the City of Refuge. How his heart beats, how his footsteps bound, how he flies with all his might! There is a signpost with the word, "Refuge," upon it, and on he continues his way. But, presently, while he is running, he turns his head and finds that the avenger of blood is after him. He sees that he is gaining upon him! He feels that he will probably overtake him. Oh, how he picks his steps lest he should trip on a stone! How he skims the ground, swift as a roe! He runs until he can see the city gates. "That is the fair CITY OF REFUGE, he says. But he does not rest then, for a sight of the city will not secure him—so he quickens his speed as if he would outstrip the wind till he shoots through the archway and he is in the broad street of the city! Now he stops. Now he breathes. Now he wipes the hot sweat from his brow. "Now I am safe," he says, "for no avenger of blood dares cross that threshold. He that once escapes here is delivered." So with the sinner when sin pursues him, when he discovers that he has offended God! He hears the furious coursers of Divine Vengeance coming on swiftly behind him and his conscience flies, and his soul speeds towards the Cross. He gets a little hope. He hears of a Savior, but that is not enough. He will never rest, he will never say he is at peace until he has passed the gate of faith and can say, "Now I do believe that Jesus died for me."

He that enters in by the door shall be saved. Noah's ark was built in the olden times to preserve Noah and his family from the great flood. It could not be said that Noah was saved till he had passed through the door—but when he had done that, a Divine hand, quite unseen, shut the door and as Noah heard it fastened and understood that the Lord had shut him in, he felt quite safe. If God shuts us in, the floods from beneath cannot drown us and the rains from above cannot penetrate to injure us. He must be safe whom God shuts in! The moment that a poor sinner trusts in Christ, God shuts the door. There he is and there he shall be till time shall be no more! He is secure. The infernal powers shall not destroy him and the vengeance of God cannot touch him! He has passed the door and he shall be saved.

I read a story the other day of some Russians crossing wide plains studded over here and there with forests. The villages were ten or a dozen miles from each other, the wolves were out, the horses were rushing forward madly, the travelers could hear the baying of the wolves behind them. And though the horses tore along with all speed, yet the wolves were close behind and they only escaped, as we say, "by the skin of their teeth," managing just to get inside some hut that stood in the road and to shut the door. Then they could hear the wolves leap on the roof, they could hear them dash against the sides of the hut, they could

hear them gnawing at the door and howling, and making all sorts of dismal nois-es—but the travelers were safe because they had entered in by the door and the door was shut! Now, when a man is in Christ, he can hear, as it were, the devils howling like wolves, all fierce and hungry for him. And his own sins, like wolves, are seeking to drag him down to destruction! But he has got in to Christ and He is such a shelter that all the devils in the world, if they were to come at once, could not harm a single beam of that Eternal Refuge! It must stand fast, though earth and Heaven should pass away!

Now, to every man and woman, Christ says that if they have entered in by the door, they shall be saved. Do not have any doubt about it! Do not let anybody raise the question whether you may be or you may not be—you shall be! Oh, clutch at that blessed, "shall." Sir, if you have been a drunk, yet, if you trust in Christ, you shall be saved! You shall not go back to your old drunkenness, but you shall be saved from it if you believe in Him. O Woman, if you have stained your character to the worst, yet if you believe in Christ, none of your old sins shall ruin you, but you shall be saved! Ah, though you are tempted every day of your lives, tempted as none ever were before, yet God is true and cannot lie—if you come through Christ, the Door, you shall be saved! Do you understand what it is to come through the door? It is to depend upon Jesus, to give yourselves to Him, to rest on Him. When you hang up your jugs and mugs on the nail in the cupboard, what keeps them from falling? Nothing but the nail! And if that holds well, nothing can fall that hangs on it.

Now, you must trust in Christ as the vessel hangs on the nail—and if you do so, He is fastened as a nail in a sure place— and you cannot and shall not perish! That is the first privilege—"he shall be saved."

He that enters in by the door "shall go in"' The man who believes in Christ shall go into rest and peace, for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. He shall go in to secret knowledge. He shall become a scholar and shall be taught by Christ as his Rabbi. He shall go in unto God with holy boldness in prayer. He shall go in unto that which is within the veil and speak to God from before the Mercy Seat. He shall go in unto the child's place and shall stand as an adopted heir of Heaven. He shall go in unto close communion with God. He shall speak with his Maker. The Lord shall lift up the light of His Countenance upon him. He shall go in unto the highest attainment in spiritual things. He shall go in to the treasure house of the Covenant and say, "All this is mine!" He shall go in to the store house of the promises and take whatever his soul needs. He shall go in, passing from circle to circle, till he comes to the innermost place where the love of God is most graciously shed abroad!

He that enters in by the door shall be saved, and he shall go in. If you know what this means, go in! Go in further. Go in more constantly. Do not stop where you are, but go in till you have got a little more. If you love Christ, come nearer to Him and nearer, and still nearer! But if you want to get into anything that is Divine, you must get in through Christ.

O you who open your Bibles and want to understand a text—the way to get into the meaning of a text is through the Door, Christ! O you who want to get more holiness, come through the Door—the way to holiness is not through Moses, but through Christ! O you who would have closer communion with your heavenly Father, the way to come in is not through your own efforts, but through Christ! You came to Christ at first to get salvation—you must still come to Christ to get sanctification! Never look for another door, for there is but one, and that one door will let you into life, love, peace, knowledge and sanctification—it will let you into Heaven! Christ is the master key of all the rooms in the palace of mercy! And if you get Christ, you shall go in. Nothing shall keep you out of any of the secret chambers. You shall go in, in God's name, through Christ, the Door!

The next privilege is that he shall go out Putting the two together—"he shall go in and out"—they signify liberty. The Christian does not come into the Church as into a prison, but he comes in as a free man, walking in and out of his own house. But what does it mean to go out? I think it means this, Brothers and Sisters. The men that trust in Christ go out to their daily business through Christ, the Door. I wonder how many of you ever thought of this? You know sometimes you get up, put on your clothes and go blundering out to work. And then you find yourselves very weak all day. Well, I do no wonder at it, for you do not go out through Christ, the Door. Suppose you had given yourselves to Christ for the day and though you had time but for a few minutes' prayer, yet you had put it thus, "Lord, I am Yours. Take care of me today. I am going out where there will be many to tempt me and try me. I do not know what may happen, but, Lord, I am going out in Your name and resting in Your strength. If there is anything that I can do for You, I desire to do it. If there is anything to suffer, I wish to suffer it for Your sake, but take care of me, Lord. I will not go out and face my fellow men until I have seen Your face. And I do not want to speak to them until I have spoken to You, nor to hear what they have to say till I have heard what God the Lord will speak." Depend upon it, it is blessed going out when you go thus through the Door! You will be sure to come home happy when you go out after this sort!

May not this going out also mean to go out to suffering? You and I are sometimes called to bear great bodily pain, or losses, or bereavements. Well now, what a sweet thing it is to go out to suffer these things through the Door, and to be able to say, "Now, my Master, this is a cross, but I will carry it, not in my own strength, but in Yours. Do what You will with me—I shall drink the cup because You appoint it." Whenever you can see Christ's hand in it, it makes the bitter sweet and heavy things soon grow light! Go to your sickbed as you hope to go to your deathbed—through the Door, that is, through Christ!

And when, as sometimes happens, we have to go out, as it were, away from fellowship with Christ, to fight with our inward sins—the right way is to go out to resist them through the Door. If you ever try to fight with sin in your own strength, or on a legal footing, or because you feel that you will be condemned if you do not overcome those sins, you will be

as weak as water! The way of victory is through the blood of the Lamb. There is no killing sin except by throwing the blood of Christ upon it. When once the blood of Christ comes into contact with the besetting sin, that sin withers straight away! Go to your spiritual conflicts through the Door.

And so, Beloved, we ought, in all that we do for the Lord, to go out through the Door. It is always sweet preaching for me when I feel that I come forth in the name of my Master—when I do not come to tell you what ideas I have woven out of my own brain, nor to put attractive figures before you, as I would like to do sometimes—but rather, when I come to tell you just what my Lord would have you know, telling it as a message to you from your God and cherishing in my own heart His great love toward perishing sinners. Then, indeed, to minister is joy! You Sunday school teachers will always teach well when you go down to the schoolroom through the Door, that is, having been with Christ, having sought and enjoyed His company. I know, my dear Brothers and Sisters, you who are teaching larger classes, you who are engaged in instructing or exhorting, you who go about any holy work—you always do it well when you have God's smile upon you in the doing of it—and you shall have great success in the doing of it if you always go to it through Christ, the Door—if you serve Christ through Christ, and do it not only for Him, but through Him and by Him! Our own strength is perfect weakness, but the strength which comes through simple dependence upon the ever-living Christ who has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"—this is the strength which wins the conquest! God give you Grace not only to go in, but also to go out through the Door.

The last privilege named in the text is, "and shall findpasture."I suppose this is what you come here for, you who love the Lord—you come here for pasture. It is a great blessing if when we come to hear the Gospel, it becomes real pasture to us. We do know some who say that the troubles of the week become unbearable because they have such barren Sabbaths. Ah, if you are members of a church that is torn with discord, where the ministry abounds in anything but Christ, you will soon begin to cry out and you will value the privilege of hearing Jesus Christ lifted up among you! But who are the people who get the pasture where Jesus Christ is preached? Not all who hear of Him, nor yet all Believers. There are times when you may hear a sermon that is of no use to you—and yet your Brother and Sister by your side may be greatly instructed and comforted thereby. In such a case, I should not wonder if it was because your friend came in to the service through the Door, and you did not.

Do you remember the story of Mr. Erskine and the good lady who went to hear him preach at the Communion? It was such sweet preaching, she thought she had never heard the like. So, after service, she asked who the gentleman was that had preached and, on being told that it was Mr. Ebenezer Erskine, she said, "I will come and hear him again next Sabbath morning." She went, she listened and she thought to herself, "Well, this is very dry, very

heavy preaching." She was not at all comforted by it! Then like a foolish woman, as I should think she must have been, she went into the vestry, and said, "Oh, Mr. Erskine, I heard you last Sabbath with much pleasure! Sir, I was never so edified and I came again this morning, but I have been dreadfully disappointed." So the good man said very calmly, "Pray, Madam, when you came to the kirk last Sabbath, what did you come for? She said, "I came to Communion, Sir." "To have fellowship with Christ, I suppose?" he asked. "Yes, Sir." "Well you came for it and you had it. And pray, what did you come here this morning for?" She said, "I came to hear you, Sir." "And you had it, woman," he said. "You had it and you had not anything else, because you did not come for anything more than that."

Well now, when people come merely to hear a minister, or for custom's sake, or for form's sake—do they not always get what they come for? If people come to find fault, we always give them plenty of our imperfections to be entertained with, so they need not be disappointed! If others come merely out of custom, they say, "Well, this is my work, I have performed my duty." Of course it is, but if you had come in through the Door, that is, looking to Christ, looking forChrist, desiring not to see the preacher, but the Lord—not to get the word of man, but the Word of God as food for your soul, I believe you would have found pasture! Brothers, the sheep need pasture. No other food will suit them. So your soul needs heavenly Truth and if you come to the House of God through Christ, you will get it! If you turn to the Bible through Christ, you will find it a rich storehouse! If you come to prayer through the door of Christ, you will find it comforting and so you shall find pasture.

I think the text may mean that he who rests in Christ shall have all his needs supplied. If the text does not mean so, another does, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside the still waters." Some of you are very poor, but if you have trusted in Christ, you may plead this promise, "You have said that I shall find pasture. Your Word declares that no good thing will he withheld from them that walk uprightly. Lord, make this true to me."

I would to God that some who have never yet entered into the fold might now be drawn to Jesus. Oh, that you would come through the Door into these four choice privileges! You may never have such another opportunity. You may never feel any of the motions of the Spirit of God again. Oh that, without delay, you would just cast your helpless souls into the Savior's gracious arms, who is able and willing to save, that you might be saved now!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON: JOHN10:1-18.

Verses 1, 2. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that enters not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber But he that enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The true Shepherd cares for the flock. The false ones are thieves and robbers who only care for the flesh or the fleece.

3. To him the doorkeeper opens and the sheep hear his voice: and he calls his own sheep byname, and leads them out.

[See Sermon #2359, Volume 40—PERSONAL AND EFFECTUAL CALLING.] John

the Baptist was the doorkeeper who opened the door of Christ's earthly ministry by bearing witness that He was the Son ofGod.

4, 5. And when heputs forth his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. Christ is the great Leader of His people and they will never go astray as long as they follow Him. The sheep of Christ recognize their Shepherd' s voice and come at His call. But "strangers" call to them in vain.

6, 7. This parable spoke Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spoke unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. No one metaphor can fully describe our glorious Lord, for He is both Shepherd and Door to the sheep, and all else that they need—

"O my Savior! Shield and Sun,

Shepherd, Brother, Husband, Friend—

Every precious name in one,

I willlove You without end!'

8-10. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief comes not but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. [See Sermon #1150, Volume

20—LIFE MORE ABUNDANT.] The thief came to take away life, but

Christ came to give life—that abundant life which shall last forever and ever! But see what it cost Him to give that life— 11-13. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep, and flees: and the wolf catches them, and scatters the sheep. The hireling flees because he is an hireling, and cares not for the sheep. Just now the contrast was between the Shepherd and the thief, here it is between the Shepherd and the hireling. The hireling cares for himself. The Shepherd cares for the sheep and provides for them and cares for them even at the cost of His life.

14, 15. I am the good shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knows Me, even so

know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. [See Sermon #1877, Volume 32—OUR OWN DEAR SHEPHERD.] There is mutual knowledge between the Shepherd and the sheep, and between the Father and the Son.

16. And other sheep Ihave, which are not of this fold: they also Imust bring, and they shall hear My voice: and there

shall be one fold, and one shepherd [See Sermon #1713, Volume 29—OTHER SHEEP AND ONE FLOCK.] Or, more correctly, "one flock, one Shepherd." The flock would never be complete without those "other sheep" which the Shepherd says He must bring into the fold, and which He says shall hear His voice. Not one of them will be missing in the day when they pass again under the hand of Him that counts them.

17, 18. Therefore does My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from Me, but Ilay it down ofMyself Ihave power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father The voluntariness of Christ's Sacrifice is its Glory, and well may His Father love Him because of it—and well may we, who are eternally to benefit by His death—also love Him!